

O 220450Z MAY 89
FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8993
INFO AIT TAIPEI IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU IMMEDIATE
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USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL CHENGDU POUCH)

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIJING 14102

CINCPAC FOR FPA FINNEY

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
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SUBJECT: SITREP NO. 9: TIANANMEN SQUARE ON MAY 22:
THE LONG VIGIL TO MORNING

REF: BEIJING 14054 AND PREVIOUS

11. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

12. SUMMARY. ON MAY 21, ONCE AGAIN STUDENTS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS WENT ALL OUT TO BLOCK AN EXPECTED ENTRANCE BY PLA TROOPS INTO BEIJING. ONCE AGAIN, ROADBLOCKS WERE SET UP AT ALL MAJOR INTERSECTIONS AND MANNED BY HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DEMONSTRATORS. AND ONCE AGAIN, THE ARMY DID NOT SHOW. THE SENSE OF VICTORY WHICH THE WEARY DEMONSTRATORS CELEBRATED AT DAYBREAK APPEARED LARGER THAN JUST ONE MORE NIGHT OF DEFIANCE, THE NINTH NIGHT OF THE TIANANMEN OCCUPATION. A WIDESPREAD VIEW AMONG DEMONSTRATORS WAS THAT AFTER THIS NIGHT AND FORTY-EIGHT SURREAL HOURS OF NON-ENFORCED MARTIAL LAW, THE PROVERBIAL "MANDATE"--POLITICAL LEGITIMACY--OF THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN LOST. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, OF COURSE, WHETHER THE LEADERSHIP AGREES. WE HAVE JUST BEEN TOLD BY AFP, HOWEVER, THAT THEY ARE RUNNING A STORY, WHICH WE CANNOT/CANNOT CONFIRM, THAT LI PENG, HU QILI, QIAO SHI AND YAO YILIN RESIGNED AT A CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING LAST NIGHT. END SUMMARY.

13. ONCE AGAIN AT 1730 ON MAY 21, THOUSANDS OF BEIJING RESIDENTS BEGAN STREAMING TOWARD TIANANMEN AND TOWARD CRUCIAL TRAFFIC INTERSECTIONS. THE TENSION WAS NOTICEABLY LESS THAN THE PREVIOUS NIGHT, SINCE THE PREVENTION OF PLA ENTRANCE INTO THE CITY AT THAT TIME GREATLY BOOSTED CONFIDENCE. STILL THERE WAS UNCERTAINTY AND A SENSE OF IMPINGING CONFRONTATION. A STORY--PROBABLY APOCRYPHAL--WIDELY CIRCULATING IN BEIJING CLAIMED THAT THE AUTHORITIES HAD ISSUED AN ULTIMATUM ON THE EVENING OF MAY 21 THREATENING MILITARY ACTION IF TIANANMEN SQUARE WERE NOT CLEARED (QINGLI GUANGCHANG) BY 0500 ON MAY 22.

14. THE CITY-WIDE NETWORK OF POPULAR-CONTROLLED STREETS EXPANDED OVER THE PREVIOUS EVENING, AS BOTH MORE PEOPLE GATHERED AT EACH INTERSECTION AND MORE INTERSECTIONS WERE "OCCUPIED" AND POLICED BY DEMONSTRATORS. THE ROADBLOCKS WERE WELL-ORGANIZED, WITH LINES OF DEMONSTRATORS FUNNELLING CARS AND TRUCKS INTO A SINGLE LINE AND HEADBANDS CHECKING THE OCCUPANTS AND, OCCASIONALLY, THE ID'S OF VEHICLE OCCUPANTS. THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THESE BEIJING RESIDENTS WERE YOUNG WORKERS (LATE TEENS TO LATE TWENTIES) OR UNEMPLOYED YOUTHS.

15. TIANANMEN SQUARE ITSELF WAS QUIETER AND THE CROWD SMALLER THAN THE PREVIOUS NIGHT, LESS THAN 100,000. THE STUDENT ENCAMPMENT POPULATION WAS DOWN CONSIDERABLY, PERHAPS AS LOW AS 20,000. ALL DEMONSTRATORS QUESTIONED EXPLAINED TO EMBOFF THAT THE

REASON FOR THE LOW NUMBERS WAS THAT MANY OF THE STUDENTS HAD GONE TO JOIN ROADBLOCKS ON THE THIRD RING ROAD TO "OPPOSE VIOLENCE WITH THEIR BODIES" (YONG SHENTI KANG BAOLI). THEY INSISTED THAT THE TOTAL "REGULAR" STUDENT POPULATION IN THE TIANANMEN ENCAMPMENT REMAINED ABOVE 200,000 WHEN THESE ABSENT STUDENTS WERE INCLUDED.

¶16. STUDENTS STATED THAT THEY HAD SWORN TO REMAIN IN THE SQUARE IN THE FACE OF THE 0500 DEADLINE, THE REPORT OF WHICH THEY CLEARLY BELIEVED TO BE TRUE. A NUMBER OF DEMONSTRATORS EXPRESSED THEIR CONVICTION THAT THIS NIGHT WOULD BE PIVOTAL (JINTIAN WANSHANG SHI GUANJIANDE WANSHANG) IN THEIR STRUGGLE. THE CRY "DOWN WITH DENG XIAOPING, DOWN WITH LI PENG" (DENG XIAOPING, LI PENG, XIATAI) REGULARLY BROKE THE NIGHT AIR.

¶17. UNANIMITY WAS THE ORDER OF THE DAY, WITH A LOW TOLERANCE FOR DISSENT AMONG THE DEMONSTRATORS. WHEN ONE "RECENT UNIVERSITY GRADUATE" EXPRESSED TO EMBOFF DOUBT THAT THE PLA WOULD TRY TO ENTER TIANANMEN SQUARE THAT NIGHT, HE WAS VICIOUSLY CRITICIZED BY STUDENTS. WHEN HE SOUGHT TO EXPLAIN HIS CONCLUSION LOGICALLY, HE WAS FORCIBLY EJECTED FROM THE GATHERING. THE DEMONSTRATORS DID NOT WISH ANY NOTE OF DISSENSION TO ENTER THEIR DISCUSSION, PARTICULARLY IN THE PRESENCE OF A FOREIGNER.

¶18. AT 0100, A DELEGATION FROM XINHUA CIRCLED THE SQUARE BEHIND A BANNER PROCLAIMING "LET BLOOD FLOW TO OPPOSE FORCE" (YIXUE KANGBAO). SHORTLY AFTER, ABOUT 1,000 MEMBERS OF THE RED-HEADBANDED "BEIJING RESIDENTS DARE-TO-DIE BRIGADE" (BEIJING SHIMIN GANSIDUI) ARRIVED IN THE SQUARE, FORMED THEIR OWN CIRCLE OF HANDS, AND BEGAN EXHORTING AND ENCOURAGING EACH OTHER TO THE TASK WHICH LAY BEFORE THEM, I.E., THE EXPECTED 0500 CONFRONTATION. THEY PROCLAIMED OVER AND OVER, "WE ARE NOT AFRAID" (WOMEN BU HAIPA) AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO SACRIFICE TO THE DEATH. THIS "BRIGADE" WAS FORMED ON THE AFTERNOON OF MAY 20 AND, SAY MEMBERS, HAS A TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF OVER 3,000; MEMBERSHIP CONSISTS ALMOST ENTIRELY OF YOUNG WORKERS AND UNEMPLOYED MALES. THE "MOTORCYCLE BRIGADE" (MOTUOCHE DUI) REGULARLY ROARED AROUND THE SQUARE. STUDENTS EXPLAINED THAT THESE 250 "PRIVATE ENTREPRENEURS" (GETIHU) ARE NOT LIKE AMERICAN MOTORCYCLE GANGS (BANG), FOR THEY SERVE AS IMPORTANT SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE STUDENTS.

¶10. AT DAWN, THE MOOD BEGAN TO LIGHTEN AND TENSION DISSIPATED. JUBILANT MARCHERS BEGAN PASSING BEFORE THE TIANANMEN REVIEWING STANDS AND OF MOTORCYCLES RACED THROUGH THE SQUARE, HORNS BLARING IN CELEBRATION. AT 0521, THE STREET LIGHTS IN THE SQUARE CLICKED OFF AND CHEERS OF VICTORY BROKE OUT.

¶11. AT 0550, THE LONG SILENT GOVERNMENT LOUDSPEAKERS ENCIRCLING TIANANMEN SQUARE STARTED UP AGAIN. "CITIZENS OF BEIJING," BOOMED THE ANNOUNCER, "BEIJING IS STILL IN DISORDER." THE SITUATION, HE CONTINUED, "MUST BE RESTORED TO NORMAL AT ONCE." THE DEMONSTRATORS LOOKED AT EACH OTHER, STUNNED BY THE CONTRAST BETWEEN HACKNEYED OFFICIAL LINE AND WHAT THEY PERCEIVED TO BE THEIR MOMENT OF VICTORY. THE ANNOUNCER CONTINUED WITH THE GOVERNMENT ORDERS: "YI (FIRST)," BEIJING CITIZENS SHOULD RETURN TO THEIR NORMAL ORDER OF LIFE. LAUGHTER RIPPLED THROUGH THE CROWD, THEN JEERING BROKE OUT. "ER (SECOND)" ECHOED ACROSS THE SQUARE AS THE CROWD TOOK UP THE CHANT OF NUMBERS: CITIZENS SHOULD RETURN TO WORK; "SAN (THREE)," STUDENTS SHOULD RETURN TO THEIR UNIVERSITIES; "SI (FOUR)," ETC.

¶12. WHEN EMBOFF ASKED THE CROWD AROUND HIM WHAT THIS ANNOUNCEMENT MEANT, MOST SAID, "IT MEANS NOTHING." AN ELDERLY LADY SAID, "IT MEANS THEY COULDN'T ENTER THE CITY" (JINBULAI). A MIDDLE-AGED WORKER STATED SUCCINCTLY, "IT IS OVER. THEY ARE DEFEATED".

(SUANLE. TAMEN SHULE). WHEN THE BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENT WAS REBROADCAST, IT WAS AT ONCE DROWNED OUT BY LAUGHTER AND JEERING.

¶13. EMBOFF RETURNED HOME THROUGH A DISORDERLY CITY. THERE WAS THE INEVITABLE DEBRIS OF LARGE CROWDS; THERE WERE STREET DIVIDER RAILINGS STREWN ABOUT, RIPPED UP TO THWART THE PLA ADVANCE THAT NEVER WAS; THERE WERE BUSES TURNED SIDEWAYS TO FORM ROADBLOCKS AT MAJOR INTERSECTIONS; AND THERE WERE THE PEOPLE, WEARY BUT CHEERFULLY GREETING EACH OTHER. "NI ZAO" (GOOD MORNING, HOW ARE YOU), THEY CALLED OUT TO STRANGERS IN VERY UNBEIJING-LIKE BEHAVIOR. MARCHING DELEGATIONS SALUTED EACH OTHER WITH CHANTS, AND PEOPLE THANKED THE DELEGATIONS. MANY CALLED OUT TO EMBOFF, WHOM THEY TOOK TO BE A CORRESPONDENT, "PLEASE QUICKLY REPORT THIS TO THE WORLD." AT EACH CORNER CROWDS GATHERED AROUND SOAPBOX SPEAKERS. THE TONE WAS ONE OF VICTORY. "TODAY IS THE PEOPLE'S DAY, TOMORROW IS THE PEOPLE'S DAY, FOREVER IS THE PEOPLE'S DAY," PROCLAIMED ONE STUDENT.

¶14. MAY 21-22 WAS MORE THAN JUST THE NINTH NIGHT OF THE STUDENT OCCUPATION OF TIANANMEN SQUARE. IT WAS A PSYCHOLOGICAL RUBICON; IN THE VIEW OF THE DEMONSTRATORS, AT LEAST, THE AUTHORITIES "LOST." IN THE MINDS OF MANY DEMONSTRATORS, THE LEADERSHIP'S FAILURE TO CLEAR THE CITY LAST NIGHT WAS A DEFEAT WHICH CONSTITUTED LOSS OF THE PROVERBIAL "MANDATE OF HEAVEN."

LILLEY